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Economic History and Geography

Customary Acres and their Historical Importance. By FREDERIC SEEBOHM. (New York: Longmans, Green and Company. 1914. Pp. xiii, 274. \$4.00.)

It is probably fortunate that these last essays of Mr. Seebohm's have been collected and published, although in their fragmentary state they offer as a rule suggestion rather than proof on the highly technical subjects with which they are concerned. Sometimes as mere notes, sometimes as more fully elaborated studies, although always incomplete, they indicate the line of argument Mr. Seebohm wished to follow, and show his clearness in arranging and ingenuity in coördinating evidence derived from very various sources and very different epochs. Their main thesis is the survival in parts of Britain, underneath all the economic changes wrought by later conquests, of certain ancient customs in the measurement of land and in the determination of the territorial units on which tribute was incident, and the establishment of a relationship between these British measures and measures on the Continent.

The first essay, the most nearly complete, deals with the unit of tribute in the British Isles, the district, in other words, which was responsible for the payment of the Welsh *mal* or tribute, the so-called *tunc* pound, or its Scottish or Irish equivalent, which was in all cases a commutation of the most ancient food rent. In Wales the unit was called in different codes the *maenol* or the *tref*, but was always, Mr. Seebohm believes, a greater or less fractional part of the square *milltyr*, or Welsh land measure, whose area was determined by the lineal *tyr*, the thousandth part of the *milltyr*, equal to the twenty-seven feet across the narrow end of the strip of open field ploughing, the "nine steps of the *meer*-ing." The *maenols* or *trefs* so determined were the areas of occupation necessary for the support of the *trefgordd*, or inhabitants of the *tref*, who had one plough, one plough team of eight oxen for coaration, and a herd of twenty-five cows. Against this argument of Mr. Seebohm's for a very early arrangement of tribute based on land units should be placed faint indications in certain Welsh documents of a still earlier kindred or personal unit. The Irish units of tribute, the smaller *tir cumail* or grazing land for twenty-five cows and the larger *tir cumail* with its arable land in addition to pasture, and the *pundlands* and *marklands* of Scotland bore, like the *tref*, Mr. Seebohm believes, a definite relation

to the square milltyr; and he suggests that the hide also may be taken as an ancient tribute unit, supporting his suggestion by defining the ten hide unit of Ine's law in terms of the British leuga, itself a fractional part of the milltyr. The smaller extent of the hide was due to the fact that society had advanced to settled agriculture in a small district and no longer required vast grazing lands like those of Wales and Ireland. In connection with this suggestion might have been mentioned the pundscots and other like rents occasionally found in English documents.

For the long British mile, the predecessor of the statute mile, sometimes indicated by old milestones and itineraries, and for its Gallic equivalent, the leuga, Mr. Seebohm finds the same ancient basis as for tribute units, three Gallic or British leugae being approximately the equivalent of the milltyr 6,677 meters. Customary acres, "the acres remaining in local use in spite of all efforts made to drive them out and substitute for them the statute acre," he examines at length both from the point of view of areal content, and also of form—whether, that is to say, they were square, as in the countries of cross ploughing and the culture of the vine and the olive, or in the rectangular shape dictated by convenience in the rougher forms of ploughing. Mr. Seebohm finds a group of acres in the form 1 x 10 in north Gaul and Britain, the chief members of which are, first, the Cornish and Armorican acre, occurring also in the Black Sea region and the Po valley, which is everywhere a very ancient acre indicative of eight oxen ploughing and pastoral husbandry, the length of whose furrow by Mr. Seebohm's somewhat complicated "lower standard of natural feet" was a division either of the itinerant measure common to Gaul and Britain or of the diagonal of its square; and, secondly, the acres of Normandy and Belgic or eastern Britain, which wherever found in Europe, seem to be acres of a higher standard laid over the lower, acres which were "interlopers" in a region once of lower standard. The maps showing British and European measures of different standards are of great interest; the discussion itself on these points, while very suggestive, is incomplete, difficult to follow, and not always convincing. The imposition on primitive people of the complicated mathematical relationships implied in Mr. Seebohm's reckoning seems especially to need further investigation and explanation. The whole discussion of customary acres and their relation to statute acres should be compared with Mr. G. J. Turner's recent studies in

the same subject, and with his conclusion that agricultural changes took place very slowly, and were natural rather than enforced by conquering races.

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Germany's Economic Progress and National Wealth 1888-1913.

By KARL HELFFERICH. (New York: Germanistic Society of America. 1914. Pp. vii, 124.)

Deutschlands Volkswohlstand 1888-1913, of which the pamphlet under review is a translation, was written on the occasion of the celebration marking the close of the first twenty-five years of the reign of the German Emperor. The author, director of the Deutsche Bank, presents in brief compass a mass of statistics illustrating economic achievement and social progress in Germany during the last quarter of a century. He points out that, because of a marked reduction in the death-rate, population has largely increased, in spite of some decline in the birth-rate. Notwithstanding the practically stationary agricultural population, as compared with the population engaged in manufacture, trade, and transportation, the crop production shows a large increase, attributed to the adoption of more scientific methods and the use of fertilizers and agricultural machinery. A much more marked increase, however, was apparent in manufactures, where invention and the utilization of mechanical power reached their highest development. The discussion of these factors and their influence on the efficiency of labor (pp. 23-34) is perhaps the most striking feature of the pamphlet. The author concludes that, while in 1895 machinery and labor contributed to manufacturing in about equal amount, by 1907 the mechanical power used had increased until it was more than twice as great an element in production as the labor employed.

While most of the statistics cited in the first two chapters are readily available, their orderly arrangement and the accompanying comments make the work of value to the general reader. The view of the author is at times unduly optimistic and laudatory. For example, the large consumption of the bread grains (wheat and rye) in Germany, as compared with other countries, can by no means be regarded as evidence of a high standard of living, but rather as an indication of insufficiently diversified diet.

In the third and final chapter, estimates of private income,